The A. F. of L. Weekly News Letter contains a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, pertaining to the judicial, legislative, and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS LETTER

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AGITATE! EDUCATE! ORGANIZE!

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"CAN'T-STRIKE" LAW FIRST SLAVERY STEP

San Francisco, Feb. 24.—"Shall California Labor Be Free or Slave?" is the title of a pamphlet issued by the state federation of labor against the "can't-strike" law pending in the state legislature.

The measure is intended to apply to public utilities and prohibits a strike until 15 days after a dispute has been finally dealt with by a board. No limit is placed upon the duration of the investigation.

In opposing this bill the unionists make these strong points:

"Public rights cannot be based upon individual wrongs.

"The public interest cannot supersede the individual interest where the personal liberty of the individual is concerned.

"No given number of men, however large, can enslave a single man for their own purposes, however important these may be.

"The individual right to quit work, conceived by itself, is merely the right to look for another job. Individual rights are valuable in proportion as they may be exercised collectively.

"To say that under the proposed measure men may quit work individually but may not do so collectively is to say, in other words, to offer the shadow and deny the substance of right.

"Labor in the United States is absolutely free to strike, and that freedom must be maintained. Any abridgement of freedom is to go backward toward the era of slavery, to retrace the long steps of mankind in the long struggle for human freedom. Assembly bill No. 538 is but a small step, it may be, but it is a step in the wrong direction. It is the first step that counts in all cases!

"The right to quit work is the one thing that most clearly differentiates the freeman from the slave. The man who is forced to work when he wishes to quit is by that fact reduced to a state of slavery.

"The argument of public convenience, if carried to its logical conclusion, would lead to the virtual enslavement of certain classes of labor for the benefit of other classes. Ultimately it would lead to the enslavement of all classes of labor and the destruction of free society.

"A strike undertaken merely to vindicate the right to strike would be a tragedy. Shall the legislature force this condition upon the people, or shall it manifain the people's liberties as the fundamental condition of public interest and social progress?"

SHORTER HOURS PAY.

Chicago, Feb. 24.—J. E. Slater, general commission merchant, is awake to the times. In a letter to merchants in the same line of business in this city he says:

"Efficiency decreases as fatigue increases.

"Doesn't it appear to you as though the merchants in South Water street would be much better off if they worked less and pocketbook, providing we could have shorter hours?

"And does it also appear to you that our help would be much more efficient for the time employed? Shorter hours are bound to be forced upon us by the local union, and unless we grasp the situation first we are all going to be subject to considerable expense. The labor proposition is fast becoming a serious one in South Water street, and it seems to me as though it would be a good thing for the merchants to get together and arrange for shorter hours, which will not count on the labor question, but for our own benefit.

"Efficiency is what counts, and with the extra long hours there is bound to be less efficiency."

WORKMEN INJURED BY FALLS.

San Francisco, Feb. 24.—The state industrial accident commission reports that during the year 1915 there were reported 7,501 accidental injuries caused by falls of workmen in California. Of this number 6; were fatal, 39 permanent and 7,396 were temporary injuries. Those caused were by ladders slipping, falls on stairs due to loss of balance or due to defects in construction of stairs, falls from scaffolds and into shafts and other unguarded openings, and slipping, falling or tripping because of being overburdened or coming in contact with protruding objects or slippery or uneven objects.

In a pamphlet issued by the commission instructions are given to avoid these accidents and photographs of correctly and incorrectly placed ladders and other devices are printed.

PROVE DISCRIMINATION.

Springfield, Mo., Feb. 24.—While a conference was held to settle the strike of motormen and conductors against the Springfield Traction company because of victimization, the claims of these strikers were clearly proven. When the conference was called the company asked that the proceedings be secret, but President Mahen of the Amalgamated Association of Street Car Men refused.

It was then shown that the company hired men to secretly work with employes. The company's attorney admitted this, but refused to state who these men are. The strikers replied that the favoritism shown to certain employes answers their question.

GOMPERS ANNIVERSARY PHOTOS

New York, Feb. 24.—The Gompers' testimonial and golden anniversary dinner committee announce that the group photo taken of those in attendance on this occasion is ready for distribution. Copies may be secured by writing to Hugh Frayne, Bartholdi building, 2 East Twenty-third street, this city, enclosing check or money order for $1. The pictures will be mailed immediately to the address given.

URGE COMPENSATION CHANGES.

Hartford, Conn., Feb. 24.—About 200 representatives of organized labor assembled at the state capitol and appeared before committee on the judiciary to write into the workmen's compensation law a section that would cover occupational diseases. It was generally understood that the law covered this subject until a recent decision by the state supreme court.

"MOVIE" OPERATORS WIN.

New Orleans, Feb. 24.—Moving Picture Operators' union, No. 293 has signed contracts with six of the leading picture houses in this city, following a vigorous campaign against omnibus houses.

8 HOURS FOR HOIST ENGINEERS.

Harrisburg, Pa., Feb. 24.—The state department of mines has ruled that hoisting engineers employed in the anthracite mines are limited to an eight-hour day, whether they hoist workmen or coal.

DEMAND UNION SHOP.

Allentown, Pa., Feb. 24.—Masons' union has presented demands to contractors to take effect the first of May. The union ship and [illegible]

STREET CAR EMPLOYES PROFIT BY UNIONISM

Detroit, Feb. 24.—President Mahon, of the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employes of America, has publish d this summary of gains last year:

"Thirty-one divisions have been established and put in good working order, with an increase of over 7,000 new members to the association. Wages have been increased for over 9,000 members, ranging from 1 to 6 cents an hour. Even in places where we were unable to completely establish the association and properly enroll the membership, wages have increased; for instance, in New York city, where the struggle is still on, the men have received an increase of 4 cents an hour. The total increase of the established locals for the year (not considering places like New York city that are not yet permanently organized) amount to over $5,000,000.

"The benefits paid by the organization to its membership during the year exceed anything in the history of the association. The local divisions have disbursed $221,369.50 for sick and death benefits, while the international association has paid in death and disability strike benefits $585,333.77, making a total of $790,703.27 paid during the year by the entire association. This amount has been expended in benefits by the association during the year 2,192 days, or over $360 for every hour and a fraction over $1.50 for every minute. In addition to these benefits paid, there have been large amounts in the way of shorter hours and better working conditions established for our members."

LABOR CAMPS CLEANED UP.

San Francisco, Feb. 24.—In Governor Johnson's message to the state legislature, which is being distributed in pamphlet form, this reference is made to conditions of immigration and housing is made:

"The commission was appointed in September, 1913, and began its work in December of that year. In the three years that have ensued it has been the pioneer in blazing the trail for a constructive immigration policy. It undertook first the cleaning up of the unsanitary labor camps in the state. It found that substantially half of the workers in these camps were immigrants. A sanitary engineer was employed and a complete handbook for the creation and maintenance of model labor camps was prepared and published, and inspectors were sent out to educate employers to the real, and even the mercenary, advantages of providing sanitary camps for their workers. The handbook or pamphlet has been officially adopted by the United States and Canadian forestry service and by many state departments. It has been put into simple methods that it appealed to employers, and the commission has been able to bring about the most miraculous improvement in the living conditions of the thousands of migratory workers in California. Up to the present time 1,000 labor camps have been inspected and 1,170 of these reinspected, showing marked improvement in nearly all cases. Of these camps 115,774."

FACTORY DEATHS REDUCED.

Philadelphia, Feb. 24.—Safety devices and safety first instruction in local factories have reduced fatal accidents 46 per cent in January of this year as compared with the same month last year. Factory inspectors have ordered the installation of 179,000 guards and 40,000 other safety appliances. It is stated that the pressure of the compensation law has done marvelous work in safeguarding the workers. In 1911, before the compensation law was passed, only 4 per cent of accidents were installed. Last year there were nearly 150,000.

Manufacturers, forced to conserve their workers' lives because of the workmen's compensation rates, have organized safety committees, installed appliances costing hundreds of thousands of dollars and a more than $1,000,000 and, in reducing their compensation costs, have cut the death toll of industry in half.

WHY ACTORS ORGANIZE.

Boston, Feb. 24.—In an effort to improve their conditions the White Rats Actors' Union, affiliated with the Federation of America is waging successful strikes against several vaudeville houses in this city and vicinity. Of this number 6 were fatal, 39 permanent and 7,396 were temporary injuries. Those caused were by ladders slipping, falls on stairs due to loss of balance or due to defects in construction of stairs, falls from scaffolds and into shafts and other unguarded openings, and slipping, falling or tripping because of being overburdened or coming in contact with protruding objects or slippery or uneven objects.

In a pamphlet issued by the commission instructions are given to avoid these accidents and photographs of correctly and incorrectly placed ladders and other devices are printed.

MOTHERS' PENSIONS FAVORED.

Sacramento, Cal., Feb. 24.—Senator F. M. Carr has introduced a mothers' pension bill in the state assembly, the purpose of which is to invest the care of half orphans in the mother instead of state institutions. The measure provides that "the state shall furnish to mothers money, in case of necessity, as follows: One child, $15 a month; two, $25; three, $35; four, $40, and five or more, $50 a month. The bill further provides that the state shall furnish money to needy orphans and half orphans by giving families similar to the amounts given by counties.

FIREMEN MAY JOIN UNION.

Boston, Feb. 24.—As a result of reports that members of the Boston fire department have been approached by contractors against joining the union affiliated to the American Federation of Labor, James Curley has notified President Jennings of the Central Labor Union that he has ordered Fire Commissioner Stanton to use his deputies not to do or say anything that will prevent any member of the department from joining a labor union.

NO RAISE FOR U. S. EMPLOYES.

Washington, Feb. 24.—The senate has rejected a conference report on wage increases in the navy yards and in the department of agriculture, covered in the agricultural appropriation bill. The salary increases which the senate refused to grant in $1,500. Wages of those receiving $1,000 or less are raised 10 per cent, and over $1,000 and not exceeding $1,200, 5 per cent.

OPPOSE NIGHT WORK.

San Francisco, Feb. 24.—Bakery Wagon Drivers' union is attempting to abolish the night delivery of bread and has succeeded during the night delivery in its new wage agreement.

CARPENTERS ORGANIZE.

Milwaukee, Feb. 24.—Carpenters' union has presented demands to contractors to take effect the first of May. The union ship and [illegible]

GRAND JURY SYSTEM NO LONGER USEFUL

Cincinnati, Feb. 24.—The Cincinnati Enquirer in times that the grand jury system has outlived its usefulness and does not favor a bill before the state legislature which would reduce the number of jurors from 15 to 12 and provides that an indictment could be returned on a vote of nine members.

"Many thoughtful minds have reached the conclusion," says the Enquirer, "that the grand jury, like the office of coroner, has outlived its necessity for existence. In theory it is splendidly designed. Detached from officialdom and sitting in secret, the private citizen might safely bring to the attention of the evils which not command the attention of the prosecuting attorney. It has, too, to act as a barrier against injustice on the part of accusing public officials, sifting the evidence and observing the witnesses with careful scrutiny.

"In practice these functions have shriveled. Rarely does the private citizen present his case to the inquisitorial body, which is the grand jury. Instead, the prosecuting attorney has the concentration of his power in the hands of fewer men, thus making its function as a 'rubber stamp' all the easier for the state's attorney."

New York, Feb. 24.—In commenting on England's announcement that grand juries would be suspended because of the war, Professor Munroe Smith, of Columbia university, said:

"In the administration of justice today in England and this country the grand jury is really a rather ornamental relic. The suspension of it seems to me like the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, which marks the institution of martial law."

FAVOR STATE INSURANCE.

Boston, Feb. 24.—In its report to the legislature the joint special committee on workmen's compensation insurance rates and accident prevention recommends that workmen's compensation insurance, heretofore transacted by stock and mutual companies, be handled by the so-called state company, be hereafter limited to the state company, thus excluding all stock and mutual companies from this business.

Figures are quoted showing that since the operation of the compensation act $3,600,000 has been paid in agents' commissions and other expenses. The figures show that it has cost 66 2-3 cents to carry a dollar through the state administration of the act, and employer to the employe, while the cost under the state company has been but 14 cents.

The committee has prepared a bill for approval by the legislature which requires that the Massachusetts Employes' Insurance association (the state company) devote its activities to the writing of workmen's compensation insurance.

GAINS BY GARMENT WORKERS.

Cincinnati, Feb. 24.—Ladies' Garment Workers' union is conducting a successful campaign for higher wages and shorter hours. Many shops have accepted the 46-hour week basis. Others wanted 48 1-2 hours, but the workers were resolute and their demand has been agreed to, as in wage demands. All work done after 5:45 p. m. shall be considered overtime, which shall not exceed qver six hours a week. Time and one-half for time and one-half for overtime.

IMPORTANT WORK; LOW PAY.

Philadelphia, Feb. 24.—Trade unionists are waiting for "the public" to rise en masse against the low wages paid by this city for important work.

A local daily newspaper shows that:

"For 12 years in the city has paid a college graduate $600 a year to observe the tides.

"Two men on whose shoulders rests the responsibility of accounting for all supplies bought for the city are day laborers at $3 a day.

"A trained nurse receives $480 a year as matron at a city institution.

"Thirty-six men who guard the purity of the city's water supply are paid day laborers' wages.

"One hundred and fourteen scrubwomen, who keep the municipal offices who have their lives for the city, are paid $250 a year; or, at most, $25 a month."

CAN SETTLE MOOTED QUESTION.

Chicago, Feb. 24.—President Weil, of the International Photo Engravers' union, offers this advice to compulsory insurance advocates:

"If our social reformers, advocating compulsory health insurance, believe that a yearly wage of $1,200 or more is essential to insure the workers against the vicissitudes of life, would it not be well to join the labor unions in this movement and thereby assist every worker to secure this yearly wage without jeopardizing his chances of steady and stultifying his ambition as a worker?"

WOULD FLOOD DETROIT.

Washington, Feb. 24.—In a signed statement to labor leaders in many cities Treasurer Berres of the A. F. of L. Metal Trades Department, calls attention to the advertising campaign of the Detroit manufacturers' association.

Metal workers in that city state that employers give no assurance of work when these advertisements are answered. They simply say, "You may be employed if you prove competent."

SEAMEN'S STRIKE ENDS.

Boston, Feb. 24.—The Eastern Steamship company had adjusted differences with the seamen's union and the strike of these workers has ended.

PAPER HANGERS RAISE WAGES.

Salem, Ohio, Feb. 24.—Paper hangers' union has raised wages from 40 cents an hour to 50 cents an hour.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS STRIKE.

Boston, Feb. 24.—Electrical workers' union has declared a strike against the Boston Elevated railway company.

PORTO RICANS TO BE CITIZENS OF AMERICA

Washington, Feb. 24.—The senate passed the Porto Rican citizenship and civil government bill after rejecting all property qualifications. The bill has passed the house.

For the first general election voters shall be recognized as they now are under the laws of Porto Rico. Thereafter they shall be citizens of the United States, and have such qualifications as may be prescribed by the legislature of Porto Rico, provided that a property qualification shall not thereafter be imposed.

It was originally proposed that members of the senate should pay taxes on $1,000 worth of property and members of the house on $500 worth of property. This provision was combatted by the American Federation of Labor and its affiliate, the Free Federation of Workmen of Porto Rico. The unions made vigorous protest against this measure and other provisions that would disfranchise about 75 per cent of the Porto Ricans.

Legislative powers will be lodged in a legislature to be elected by the people of that island, the senate to consist of 19 members elected for four years, two each from seven districts and five senators-at-large. The house of representatives will consist of 39 members, elected quadrennially.

The legislature will elect a commissioner to the United States, and all its laws will be subject to review by congress, the president also having the veto power.

VOCATIONAL BILL PASSED.

Washington, Feb. 24.—The house and senate have agreed to the conference report on the two vocational bills passed by these two bodies and the bill is now before the president for approval. There were 137 differences between the two bills. The most important difference was in the manner in which the law should be administered. The senate favored a board consisting of five cabinet officials who would select an advisory board of seven members. The house favored appointment by the president of a board consisting of a representative of labor, manufacturing, commerce and agriculture to act with the federal commissioner of education.

These differences have been compromised by blending the two plans so that the secretary of agriculture, secretary of commerce, secretary of labor, and the commissioner of education as ex-officio members of the board and the president shall appoint, with the advice and consent of the senate, representatives of labor, manufacturing, commerce and agriculture to act with the board.

Under this act the federal government will match state, by appropriations, in preparing persons for the teaching of trade, home economics, industrial and agricultural subjects.

The American Federation of Labor has been a continuous advocate of this legislation.

EARNS $8 PER CENT.

New York, Feb. 24.—The Pacific Mail Steamship company last year earned $8 per cent on the investment of $5,000,000 in the operation of its Panama, fleet of steamers, according to the annual report to stockholders, just made public.

This is the company that "was driven out of the Pacific trade by reason of the Panama canal." It was later shown that the company sold the steamships Monowai, Manchuria and Korea, and sent China to the International Mercantile Marine company, not because of the seasonable rates, but because of fabulous prices. Pacific Mail then purchased the Venezuela, the Colombia and the Ecuador. These vessels have been converted to all-burning craft to admit of greater economies of operation and huge dividends on the investment. The silenced newspapers that joined in the howl against the seaman's act will see that a federal tradehend congress would repeal the statute.

OVERTIME FOR DREDGE MEN.

Washington, Feb. 24.—The reclamation service of the federal department of the interior has adopted the following rule to form the basis for overtime payments to steam and dredge men:

"Time and one-half for all overtime, except when moving or digging with one's own machinery or holidays, which shall be paid for at the rate of double time; the following holidays to be observed: New Year's day, Memorial day, Fourth of July, Labor day, Thanksgiving day and Christmas."

The foregoing rule shall be understood to apply to engineers, firemen and cranemen employed on steam shovels and hydraulic dredges, and in order that payments may be made in accordance therewith this rule shall be incorporated in the contracts for employment."

GARMENT WORKERS STRIKE.

Chicago, Feb. 24.—Nearly 10,000 members of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' union, employed in 200 shops, have suspended work to enforce shorter hours, wage increases, sanitary shops and recognition of shop committees to adjust grievances. The strikers asked that the manufacturers to arbitrate these demands, but were refused. Most of the strikers are women. They claim that the employers attempted to lock them in their workrooms the day the strike was called to prevent them from walking out.

FUR WORKERS STRIKE.

Toronto, Ontario, Feb. 24.—Sixty fur workers employed by the Canadian Fur company, struck for more wages, which average 18 and 20 cents an hour. About 120 fur workers in another concern were suspended work because they were asked to sign an agreement calling for the Halifax agreement. Officers of the International Fur Workers' union are assisting these employes.

TO SEPARATE LABOR OFFICE.

Carson City, Nev., Feb. 24.—Creation of the office of labor commissioner is sought in a measure introduced in the state assembly. The duties of the commissioner are to be associated with the industrial commission, but the bill separates the two departments.

TO PROTECT SETTLERS.

Washington, Feb. 24.—The house has passed senate bill No. 8,300 which provides that the secretary of the interior may issue representation to purchasers of land. This legislation is intended to put an end to the practice of land agents.

BOILER MAKERS RAISE WAGES.

Vancouver, British Columbia, Feb. 24.—After a short strike boiler makers have secured an increase in wages from 45 cents an hour to 50 cents an hour.

TEAMSTERS WAGES RAISED.

Columbus, Ohio, Feb. 24.—Teamsters' union has raised wages from 22 1-2 cents an hour to 25 cents an hour.

WAGE LAW SHATTERED; UNION'S PLAN URGED

Seattle, Wash., Feb. 24.—Judge Tallman of the Superior Court of the State of Washington, has perforated beyond recognition the minimum wage and eight-hour laws of this state.

In his court awarded a laundry worker damages against the Model Laundry company for violation of these laws. It was proven that the company speeded up its employes and then laid them off for two days a week. Under this system, which would not be tolerated by a laundry workers' union, the employes were forced to be in the plant 12 and 12 hours a day, although they received wages for less than half these hours, for the actual time they labored.

The company appealed from the damage award and Judge Tallman sustained the appeal. His decision permits employers to pay women by the hour or by the day at the rate of $3 a week.

Commenting on this decision, the Seattle Union Record says:

"This decision leaves the girls working in laundries, candy factories, etc., and who are not organized, absolutely at the mercy of an unprincipled set of bosses as ever wielded a slave whip and is certainly anything but a feather in the hats of the judges who are responsible for it. However, it merely goes to prove in a new way what many times made by labor that the only way to make labor laws effective is to build effective labor organizations—and then laws will not be needed so much."

MINE DEATH RATE CUT.

Washington, Feb. 24.—The federal bureau of mines reports that fewer men lost their lives in American coal mines during 1916 than in any year of the last 10, although the year was the most prosperous in the history of the country, with more men employed and greater tonnage taken from the earth than ever before.

Three-and-three-tenths of each 1,000 were killed by accident, the lowest death rate in the history of the country on record per ton of coal mined. The number killed was 2,26, which is 44 less than in 1915, 239 less than in 1914, and 560 less than in 1913. There were 65,000,000 more tons of coal mined than in 1915.

The new reduction of 44 lives lost for the year 1916 does not disclose by any means the gratifying results obtained," said Van H. Manning, director of the bureau of mines. "If the same conditions had prevailed in 1913 in regard to the tonnage for each life lost, there would have been at least 776 more men killed."

It is stated that the safety-first movement and the friendly co-operation which that has been developed between state mine inspectors, mine operators, the miners and the mine unions is responsible for decreased fatalities.

INJUNCTION IGNORES RIGHTS.

Chicago, Feb. 24.—In opposing the injunction process in times of strikes, Secretary Morrison of the state federation of labor calls attention to this section from the Illinois constitution:

"Every person may freely speak, write and publish on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that liberty; and in all trials for libel, both civil and criminal, the truth when published with good motives and for justifiable ends, shall be a sufficient defense."

"So reads the constitution of the state of Illinois," says Secretary Olander. "By every process except writ shall have the right to free speech and free press.

"But injunction judges ignore the constitution and hold that the right of free speech and free press can be exercised by every person except striking people on strike for better living and working conditions."

TELLS 'EM THINGS THEY KNOW.

Bay City, Mich., Feb. 24.—Judge Vaughan of the circuit court has modified an injunction against striking iron molders and their sympathizers by telling them they have a lawful right to do and not do things the criminal statutes prohibit.

Under Judge Houghton's injunction system if these strikers are charged with violence they are tried by a jury, guilty and must prove their innocence by showing cause why they should not be punished.

If another citizen would be accused on the same charge he would be presumed to be innocent and would be accorded a trial by jury.

This injunction is one of many proposes judge-made law.

CONVICTS FED COLD MUSH.

Trenton, N. J., Feb. 24.—A state investigator has reported to Governor Edge that convicts in the penitentiary are fed corn mush, placed in the cells in uncovered metal pans two hours before they are served, after being cooked in the shops. The mortality rate for tuberculosis is 27 per cent of the prison population.

"This does not take into account," it is stated, "the 25 per cent of the convicts paroled or pardoned or discharged from the prison hospitals while undergoing treatment for the disease, nor the number from the prison within three months after leaving the hospital."

ALLEGED LABOR BODY SCORED.

New York, Feb. 24.—In opposing the constabulary and compulsory health insurance bills before the senate judiciary committee by Senator Mills, Frank X. Sullivan, counsel for the state federation of labor, told delegates to the Central Federated Union that these bills, if passed, would injure trade unions and that Senator Mills had been "put up" to do this work. He asserted that both measures originated in the American Society for Labor Legislation, "a body backed by such plutocrats as Rockefeller."

AN AWFUL SUGGESTION.

Cincinnati, Feb. 24.—Samuel S. Schmidt, superintendent of the Associated settlement, advises that surveys of the rich be made and that settlements be established where the wealthy may learn to laugh how to live moderately.

The suggestion has shocked "uplifters" and idle rich who devote their lives to advising the poor.

DIET AND CRIME ARE PARTNERS.

Columbus, Ohio, Feb. 24.—Diet and crime go hand in hand, said Judge Frank Ruth in a public address.

"Children who are growing up in criminal courts can be traced back to the squalid and filthy environment of the tenements."

TEAMSTERS WAGES RAISED.

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Feb. 24.—Teamsters' union has secured an increase in wages from $2.50 to $3 per day.

BRICKLAYERS ORGANIZE.

Milwaukee, Feb. 24.—Bricklayers' union has presented demands to contractors to take effect the first of May. The union ship and [illegible]

LABOR PARTY SPLIT; UNIONS ARE INTACT

Adelaide, South Australia, Feb. 24.—In summing up Australian labor conditions during the past year, the Daily Herald indicates that while the trade union movement has lost many members on European battlefields, and has made few industrial gains because of the war, it remains intact.

The political field disaster is recorded as a result of the referendum vote on the question of conscription. Although forced conscription was defeated by the people of this continent, it "was the immediate cause of the split in the Labor party."

"In slanging back at 1916," continues this paper, "laborites have to admit a black year. It opened full of promise. It closed in something very like disaster. January saw a united party in possession of the commonwealth government, and with an assured majority in each house. December saw a split into fragments, and with no effective control over either the administration or the legislature of Australia. Concurrently labor has lost ground in the states. In New South Wales, in Western Australia, and in Tasmania democratic governments have been replaced by conservative combinations. In South Australia the spirit of conciliation has been lost. Victoria still sees labor in opposition and somewhat weakened by the disruption of representation. The spirit of democracy is still flying. Seldom has there been such a disintegration in 'a great parliamentary year' more remarkable is that it is not the result of a popular rejection at the polls.

"In seeking the cause for this laborites are led irresistibly to the war. Perhaps it has not been sufficiently realized. Reactionary hardly understand its true meaning.

The Daily Herald says that while a large majority of workers opposed conscription, the referendum campaign developed a severance in the labor ranks that could not be but reflected in the parliamentary ranks.

The feeling between the two camps resulted in the expulsion of Prime Minister Hughes and those who associated from the Labor party. Attempts are now being made to reconcile differences.

EYES OPEN, BUT ARE BLIND.

Albany, N. Y., Feb. 24.—Organized labor in this state has devoted much energy in opposition to the "cossack" system, known as state constabulary. The workmen have repeatedly shown the brutality of Pennsylvania "cossacks" during strike times and protested against the action of New York empowering any body of men to make arrests without warrant.

Opponents of the "cossacks" ignore these statements and plead that the farmer should be protected from apple thieves and that trade unionists are against law and order.

An official of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen has written Senator H. Bronson Brown, of Rochester, N. Y., to oppose the "cossack" bill and characterizes it as a childish reply.

"What leads your Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen to write me against the state police bill? Is it possible that men of the intelligence and position of railroad trainmen think so lightly of maintaining the security of property in a community that they are opposed to an efficient police force? Or is there some particular clause in the bill which you are unwilling to have restrained?"

STATE A BAD EMPLOYER.

Albany, N. Y., Feb. 24.—The state of New York, instead of being a model employer, is a persistent violator of the laws for the protection of workers, according to a report by the state industrial commission. The conditions described affect 2,187 state workers. A large number of employes in the capitol building are suffering from eye strain and other ailments readily traceable to bad lighting and defective sanitation in that $20,000,000 structure.

"Were the men and women employed in any factory to be found working conditions would not be tolerated for a moment," the report says. "The proprietors of the factories would be served with 314 orders to ameliorate conditions. Among the orders issued are: Improving sanitation, installing better lighting, and repairing elevators, to supplement their plants with means of exit required under the law for the protection of their workers in the case of fire or panic."

DIVIDED ON SOCIAL INSURANCE.

Boston, Feb. 24.—In its report to the legislature the special commission on social insurance divides on the following recommendations on old age pensions, health insurance, unemployment insurance and hours of labor in continuous industries.

Three members report that while there may at some time be a necessity for establishing an old age pension system, that has not been shown. One member suggests that if the income tax law recently enacted uncovers intangible property sufficient to meet the need, then pensions, noncontributory pensions should be adopted. Another member favors old age pensions but can be financed without too great increasing the burden of taxation. Another member advocates the immediate establishment of a noncontributory system.

FAVOR MORE PUBLICITY.

Indianapolis, Feb. 24.—Officers of the Brotherhood of Firemen and Engineers, have started a publicity campaign to offset what is declared to be misrepresentations of rail street representatives of the railroads to prejudice the great mass of the American people against the railroad brotherhoods in their shorter work-day demands.

Bulletins will be issued and furnished in lots to members and lodges at actual cost for distribution in the various communities.

"If every member will do his part in educating the people to the fact that the millions of dollars expended by the railroads in purchasing newspaper space will have no avail, then but little advance will be made."

JURY CAN INCREASE DAMAGES.

Pittsburg, Pa., Feb. 24.—The state supreme court has ruled that a jury can increase damages where it is satisfied. A woman was struck by a trolley car in this city and sued for $10,000. The jury brought in this sum and would not reduce her verdict for $15,000, whereupon the judge who presided at the trial accepted the second statement to be amended so as to claim "from $10,000 to $20,000" for her injuries. The street car company appealed on the ground that the jury should not have permitted this amendment.

STRIKEBREAKERS RUN AMUCK.

Mexico City, Feb. 24.—Strikebreakers employed by the Mexican Light and Power company ran amuck in the streets of this city, firing upon pedestrians and passengers in automobiles. Many persons were injured.

FREEDOM IS ASSURED WORKERS OF MEXICO

Washington, Feb. 24.—Copies of the constitution of the Republic of Mexico, adopted by a delegate convention at Queratero, Mexico, last month, have been received at the headquarters of the American Federation of Labor.

The new organic act of the Mexican people will prove an eye-opener to "can't-strike" advocates in the United States, who insist that employes should surrender their right to cease work if the public is inconvenienced. The Mexican constitutional convention has rejected this theory and has taken the most advanced position of any nation in the world on the question of the rights of the workers to strike. The constitution recognizes the right of workers to strike and employers to lock out their workers. Even government employes may strike, but in this case a 10 days' notice must be given to the commission of conciliation and arbitration.

Strikes can not be declared illegal because of violence done by individual strikers or small groups of strikers. Before a strike can be declared illegal violence by a majority of the strikers must be committed against property or persons or, in case of war, if the strikers are employed in government establishments.

Reports of the personnel of this convention, received at A. F. of L. headquarters, state that probably one-third of the delegates were trade unionists and that the entire delegation from the state of Yucatan were members of organized labor.

ARE HIGH DUES PROFITABLE!

Cincinnati, Feb. 24.—Members of the International Molders' union are considering raising their dues to 50 cents a week from the present $9 a month.

In the current issue of the International Molders' Journal, Editor Frey requests members to answer these questions before voting:

"In the first place, is trade unionism a good thing for the molder class?

"Is it necessary for their welfare and advancement, that it be a good policy for them to make their trade union as effective as possible?

"Do the members of an organization, which has ample funds, make more rapid progress than those who have but little income and no money?

"In which period of our history did our members make the most rapid progress and secure the best wages and shortest hours, when the dues were less than 25 cents, when they were less than 50 cents or when they became 75 cents per week?

"If less or more, or after, the dues became 40 cents per week that the International Molders' union was able to eliminate the wage differential in the minimum wage rate?

"Is there any evidence that in the future it will be any more easy to fight for our rights as we have in the past?

"Will we be able to fight for these rights and enforce our demands as effectively as necessary against those who seek to defeat us if we increase the revenue of our defense fund?"

HUGH DORAN IS DEAD.

Chicago, Feb. 24.—Hugh Doran, veteran trade unionist, is dead, aged about 72 years. Mr. Doran was one of the "old guard" in the organized labor movement. In 1881 he was elected a member of the first general executive board of the International Association of Machinists, and with the exception of one year continuously thereafter until 1915 he served his apprenticeship as a machinist in the railroad shops of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy railroad and was for years employed as a machinist in the Chicago municipal water works department.

The general executive board of the International Association of Machinists, in session in Washington at the time of his death, officially recognized the passing of this veteran of the labor movement and his valiant work in the cause of justice.

COURT UPHOLDS SEAMEN'S ACT.

Mobile, Ala., Feb. 24.—The seamen's law was declared constitutional by Federal Judge Ervin in a decision which, as far as known, is the first construing the legality of the La Follette seamen's act. The contention of the Russian consul that the law does not apply to the 37 certain men of the Russian vessel Imperhorne were entitled to full pay and discharge at this port, and to refuse to make out deductions, as is prescribed by law. The contention of the Russian consul is that the law does not apply to the 37 men, who are subjects of the czar.

Before the seamen's law was passed these sailors would be arrested by United States authorities at the request of the Russian consul, and placed back on the ship.

PENSION FOR RAIL CONDUCTORS.

Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Feb. 24.—Officers of the Order of Railway Conductors announce that they have completed details of the pension plan to be acted on at the last convention. The plan is optional with members. The laws provide that no one over 50 years of age can be admitted after March 1, and after September 1 no one more than 50 years of age can be admitted. During the period there is no age limit to bar conductors and the benefits of the order of railroads or other remunerative employment whereby they earn $90 a month.

THUG CAUSES HEAVY LOSS.

St. Louis, Mo., Feb. 24.—The circuit court has awarded $6,000 damages against the John O'Brien Boiler Works company in favor of the widow and family of a union boiler maker who was pleasteting his plant. The unionist was killed and shot by one of the company's imported thugs.

COMPENSATION FOR VIRGINIA.

Richmond, Va., Feb. 24.—The commissioner of labor of Governor Stuart is to prepare a workmen's compensation bill has organized. Employers and employes are represented on the commission. They will report its findings to the next general assembly.

GLAZIERS' STRIKE SETTLED.

Boston, Feb. 24.—Organized glaziers have secured an agreement with local plate glass firms after a year's strike. Under the agreement working conditions are improved and the union is recognized.

PRINTING TRADES GAIN.

Seattle, Wash., Feb. 24.—The local wage scale of the Allied Printing Trades Council has raised wages 2 cents a day, and in some cases higher rates are obtained. A nine-hour working condition is to take effect the first of May.

LABOR LAW INCLUDES SEAMEN.

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